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S E C R E T JERUSALEM 000615

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA. NSC FOR SHAPIRO/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/03/2019

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [IS](#) [PBTS](#) [KWBG](#) [PTER](#)

SUBJECT: ATTACK KILLS ONE CHILD, INJURES ANOTHER IN WEST
BANK SETTLEMENT

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. A Palestinian armed with an ax killed one child and injured a second at Bat Ayin settlement, southwest of Bethlehem, on April 2. The Gush Etzion Regional Council Chairman spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu the same day to encourage Netanyahu to strengthen the checkpoint regime in the West Bank to prevent further attacks. Senior PA officials told the Consul General April 3 that PA security forces have apprehended a suspect they believe carried out the attack and have communicated this to the GOI. End summary.

Settler Councilman Discusses Attack

¶2. (C) Gush Etzion Regional Council Chairman Shaul Goldstein told Poloff on April 3 that a lone Palestinian with an ax killed 13 year old Shlomo Nativ and injured seven year old Yair Gamliel, who was hospitalized with a fractured skull. (Note: Yair's father Ofer Gamliel, a member of the "Bat Ayin Underground," was one of three Bat Ayin settlers convicted in Israel for terrorism in 2003 for participation in a 2002 plot to bomb a Palestinian school in East Jerusalem, according to press reports. There is no indication that Gamliel's son was specifically targeted in the April 2 attack. End note.) Goldstein said Ofer Gamliel has been given a prison furlough to visit his son in the hospital.

¶3. (C) Goldstein said he spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu on April 2 about the attack. Goldstein said he encouraged Netanyahu to maintain or strengthen the checkpoint regime in the West Bank to catch or at least restrict the movement and access of "terrorists" such as the Palestinian who attacked the children at Bat Ayin. Goldstein also pressed Netanyahu not to grant concessions to Hamas, such as releasing incarcerated Palestinians in exchange for abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, saying that such concessions create an atmosphere of tolerance for terrorism. He said the perpetrator of the attack was deliberating testing Netanyahu, and blamed the attacker's success on budget cuts for the police, which reduced the presence of patrols and security cameras in the area.

¶4. (C) Goldstein confirmed press reports that IDF patrols were deployed to the Gush Etzion settlement bloc following the April 2 attack, to provide additional protection for the settlers and to deter revenge attacks by the settlers against nearby Palestinian villages. He said Shin Bet told him they believe the attacker acted alone, and was not a member of an organized terrorist organization.

Palestinians Apprehend Suspect

¶5. (S) In an April 3 meeting with the Consul General,

senior PA officials said PA security forces apprehended a suspect April 2 they think may be the perpetrator of the Bat Ayin attack. The officials asserted that this information had been passed to Israeli authorities that the suspect remains in Palestinian custody.

WALLES